

A wonderful Example of God's Iustice, shewed upon one Jasper Conningham, a Gentleman born in Scotland, who was of opinion that there was neither God nor Devil, To the Tune of, O Neighbour Robert.



I was a Scotch-man,
a Scotch-man lewd of Life,
That long had Lived
unlawful from his wife:
His name was Jasper Conningham,
as I did understand;
Whose dwelling was in Aberdine,
a town in fair Scotland.

Is not great torments
prepar'd for hateful sin?
Is not God as righteous
as ever he hath bin?
Is not hell prepared
with quenchless flames of fire,
To give such wicked persons,
their due deserved hire.

You speak of a reckoning,
and of a Judgement day:
And after Life is ended,
and flesh consum'd away:
And of a God most justly,
will plague all things amiss,
And those that do believe it,
are much deceiv'd I wis.

He had a sister
which was both fair and bright,
Whom happily wedded
unto a worthy Knight;
Godly, wise, and vertuous
in every thing was she:
A fairer comely Lady,
in Scotland could not be.

Wherefore dear brother
repent and call for grace;
Let not these motions
within your heart take place:
Consider how to judgement,
we shall one day be brought,
To answer for our follies
which in this Life we wrought.

Alas, he said, my sister,
these things are nothing so,
No God nor Devil is biding,
in heaven nor hell I know:
All things are wrought by nature
the Earth, the ayre, and sky,
There is no joy nor sorrow
after that men do dye.

Her Wicked Brother
such inward pains did prove,
That with his fair Sister
he greatly was in love:
He watches time and wooes her,
he shews to her his mind,
And still he says sweet sister
be not to me unkind.

Her brother hearing
her godly Christian talk,
Within the Garden
as they alone did walk
Blasphemously replied,
as shameless as he good,
Saying she had declared
a tale of Robin Hood.

Therefore let me have pleasure
while here I doe remain;
I fear not Gods displeasure
nor hells tormenting pain:
No sooner had he spoken
this foul blasphemous thing,
But that a heavy judgement
upon him God did bring.

This comely Lady
in mild and gentle wise,
Unto her Brother
thus meekly replies;
The Lord forbid dear brother
I should consent at all,
To such a damned action
as bring our souls in thrall.

You are deceived
fair sister then said he,
To talk of Heavens Glory,
or hells Plagues to me;
These are devised fables
to keep poor souls in fear,
That were by wise men written,
though no such things there were,

For in the Garden,
whereas he did abide,
Suddenly a fire
sprang up on every side,
Which round about inclosed
this Damned Wretch that Day,
Who ro'd and cri'd most grievous,
But could not start away.

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The second Part, to the same Tune.



This fearful fire
up to his knees did rise,
Burning blew like blimstone
in most outrageous wise:
The Lady which beheld it,
run crying in for aid
To pluck away her brother
which in the fire staid.

But nought prevailed,
for all that they could do,
Long staves and also pitchforks
they reached him unto;
Because they durst not venture
neer to the fiery flame,
He taking hold upon them
to draw him out of the same.

But not a finger
nor hand that he could move,
His arms hung dead behind him,
great pains that he did prove,
And now he bans and curses
the day that he was born;
And wishes that his carcass
by evils might be torn.

How feel I surely,
quoit he, there is a God;
That sore doth plague me,
with his strong iron rod.
O hide me from his presence,
his looks are death to me,
Nothing but wrath and vengeance,
about him I do see.

I have despised him,
but can no whit repent,

My heart is hardened,
my mind cannot relent,
No pity nor compassion,
nor mercy is in store,
For me vile wretched creature,
despised for evermore.

I am in hell tormented
and to endless pain,
Look how the devils torment me
in stretching every vein,
Look how they swarm about me,
oh what hell fiends are these,
Who worth the time that ever,
I did the Lord displease.

I burn in flaming fire,
yet do no whit consume,
My conscience doth torment me,
that did in sin presume.
Alas my loving Sister,
now I do know full well,
There is a God most righteous,
and eke a devil in hell.

And with these speeches
his eyes fell from his head,
And by the strings hung dangling
below his chin stark dead.
See how the devils then he said,
have plucked my eyes out quite,
That alwaies was unworthy
to view the heavens light.

Then from his mouth there fell,
his foul blasphemous tongue,
In ugly manner
most piteously it hung.

And there away it roted
in all the peoples sight,
By Lice and filthy vermine,
it was consumed quite.

With gasping groaning
and shrieks that sounded high,
Two hours after
this cursed man did lye,
And there at length he dyed,
and then the fire ceast
His carcass stunk more filthy
then any carrion beast.

No man was able
for to endure the smell,
Nor yet to come to bury him,
as true report doth tell;
Untill he was consumed
he laid above the ground,
The dore about the garden,
therefore was locked round.

Let all Blasphemers
take warning by this thing,
Lest that Gods vengeance
they do upon them bring.
And Lord grant all Christians
thy holy grace and fear,
They may think on the punishment
that Conningham had here.

FINIS.

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